

Coronavirus Disease 2019

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance Vaccine Distribution Prioritization

How COVID-19 Vaccines will be Allocated in Los Angeles County

There will be a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccines for the first few months after they are available. This means that the vaccine will be offered to different groups of people at different times (or phases). When enough vaccine is ready, it will be offered to everyone, but this will likely take months. Vaccine may not be available to the general public – people who do not have any special risk factors – until sometime in the spring or summer of 2021.

Who makes the decisions?

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is an independent panel of medical and public health experts brought together by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to make recommendations about vaccine policies. The ACIP recommends to the CDC which people should be in each phase. While states often follow the ACIP recommendations, final decisions about when different groups will get the vaccine are made by each state. In California, those decisions are being made by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is responsible for carrying out the state's plan, deciding exactly how each phase of vaccine distribution will be carried out: where vaccines will be given, who will be giving the vaccines, and how the county will make sure everyone has a chance to get a vaccine when it is offered to people in their phase.

How do the ACIP and the state decide who should be in each phase?

These goals and principles are used to guide decisions about the order in which people are vaccinated

Goals – what we are trying to achieve:

- Reduce deaths and cases of serious disease.
- Keep key healthcare services and the larger community operating
- Limit the extra strain that COVID-19 is having on people with chronic health conditions and people experiencing extreme hardship.

Principles – the guidelines that will help us get to our goals:

- **Do as much good and as little harm as possible.** For example, make sure we use the vaccine that comes to Los Angeles County as efficiently as possible AND make sure people don't have to go to crowded places where they could catch COVID-19 to get the vaccine.
- **Reduce health inequities.** This means that the needs of people who experience worse health due to poor living or working conditions are recognized in planning the phases for distribution.
- **Promote justice.** This means, for example, making sure richer people can't buy their way to a place at the head of the line.
- **Promote transparency.** In other words, make sure the public has information on every step in the process and knows where they can get more information if they need it.

In addition, there are other things to consider, like how to offer the vaccine in a way that reaches as many of the people in each phase as possible. This is complicated, especially since we don't want people to gather in big crowds where they can't be six feet apart when they get vaccinated.

Who will get vaccinated first?

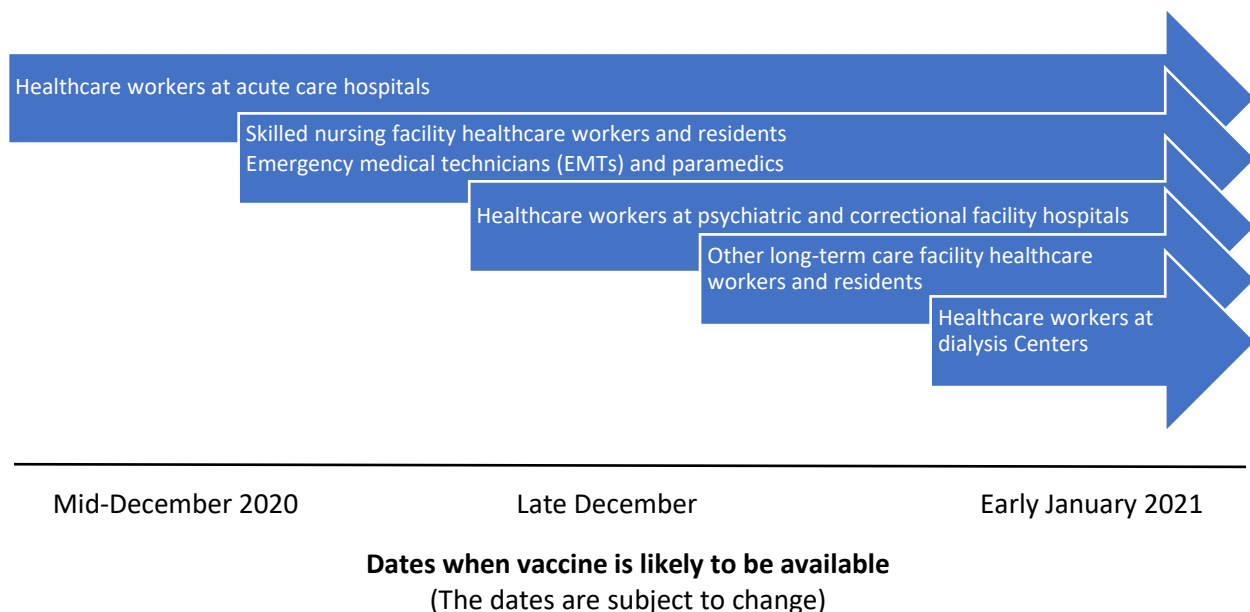
Healthcare workers and people who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities are being offered the first doses of COVID-19 vaccines.

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- **Healthcare workers** are at high risk of being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 and getting sick. Healthcare workers include clinical staff such as doctors, nurses, and therapists as well as people who work in other areas like laboratories and hospital environmental services. Vaccinating these people first protects them, but it also helps to keep the healthcare system working and helps protect patients from getting COVID-19.
- People who live in **long-term care facilities** (for example, nursing homes) are at high risk of COVID-19. This is because they live together and are often older adults with medical conditions. If they get infected, they are more likely to get very sick and even die. Vaccinating people who live in these settings will save lives.

The order of who gets vaccine first has been decided for the first phase – Phase 1A. This is shown in the picture below. There is an overlap in when each group is offered the vaccine.



Which groups will be vaccinated next?

The CDC has not announced who will be in the next phases after Phase 1A. It is likely that essential workers who cannot work from home and provide critically important services will be next because they are at high risk of being exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Older adults, and adults with medical conditions are also likely to be picked because they are more likely to become very sick if they get COVID-19. The general public will probably be offered vaccine after the priority groups. . We will share more information when it is available from the CDC and the State.

Note that children will not be offered vaccine in the near future. The new vaccine from Pfizer has only been tested in people age 16 and over. The new vaccine from Moderna, if authorized by the FDA, will only be for people age 18 and over.

What should I do while I wait to be vaccinated?

Follow the prevention guidelines you've heard about since the pandemic started. You should cover your mouth and nose with a face covering whenever you are around others. Avoid close contact with other people outside your household, especially if they could be sick. Practice physical distancing and wash your hands often. See the guidance for [reducing your risk](#). And note: you still have to follow these steps after you get both doses of vaccine.

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More information

LA County Department of Public Health: *Guidance for the Allocation of Phase 1A Tier 1 COVID-19 Vaccine*

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/docs/LACPhase1AFullGuidance.pdf>

CDC: *When Vaccine is Limited, Who Gets Vaccinated First?*

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations.html>

